The Conspiracy Complex

A quarter of a century after JFK's assassination, some investigators still reject the official account. Here in outline are several of the conspiracy theories:

A Mafia Capo In Dixie Did It

By John H. Davis

HERE WAS no more desperately threatened enemy of the Kennedys in the fall of 1963 than Carlos Marcello, the Mafia boss of the Gulf Coast. For, in the fall of 1963, Attorney Gener-

al Robert F. Kennedy, with the full back-ing of his brother, was bent on destroying Marcello's power once and for all. The Justice Department's conspiracy and perjury case against Carlos and his brother Joe, due to go to trial that November, was

to be the first step in removing Carlos from the country forever. Carlos Marcel-lo's possible motive, then, in killing the

lo's possible motive, then, in killing the president, would have gone far beyond revenge, to survival.

Everything he had built up over the years, as well as his very presence in the United States, was under direct attack from the Kennedys at the very moment President John F. Kennedy was venturing into Marcello territory.

The sheer volume and extent of the body of circumstantial evidence suggesting the possible involvement of the Mar-

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cello organization in the assassination that has accumulated over the past 25 years is now sufficient-

cumulated over the past 25 years is now suttrient-by persuasive to require evaluation and action on the part of the government. To imply, as the dustice Department has done by its inaction, that this body of evidence is meaningless requires us to brand at least 18 wit-reases, and informants as either lives or lunaities. nesses and informanta as either liars or lunatics, nesses and intormants as either hars or lunates, or both, and requires us, as well, to regard the extraordinarily large number of relationships shared by Lee Harvey Oswald [the president's killer]. Jack Ruby [Oswald's killer] and David Ferrie [a Friend of Oswald] with associates of Carlos Marcello as mere coincidence.

To be able to get away with the assassination, Carlos would have had to anticipate the responses of the Dallas police, the FBI, the Central Intelligence Agency, whatever special investigative body President Lyndon Johnson might choose to appoint and a possible investigative effort, independent of the FBI, by Attorney General Kennedy.

HE LOUISIANA Mafia had an entente with the Dalias Police Department dating back to the 1940s when the Chicago outlit attempted to take over Dalias using young Jack Ruby as one of its tools. As for the FEI, it has become more and its tools. As for the FBI, it has become more and more apparent that Carlos must have exerted some control over the FBI field office in New Orleans in the early '80s. There is no other convincing explanation of why the New Orleans agents assigned to oversee Marcello failed so completely to carry out Attorney General Kennedy's order to upgrade their

John H. Davis is the author of "Mafia Kingfish: Carlos Marcello and the Assassi-nation of John F. Kennedy" (McGraw-Hill), from which this has been excerpted.

investigation of Carlos Marcello, including the de-

ployment of electronic surveillance against him.
As for the CIA, we know that Marcello admitted to having participated in the CIA-Mafia plots to assessinate Cubar leader Fidel Castro and wasclose assassinate Cuban leader Fine Castro and was close to at least one of the plotters, Santo Trafficante. The agency would never undertake a thorough investigation of the assassination if the leading suspects in the crime were knowledgeable of the CIA-Mafia plots against Castro, for fear of having its darkent secret revealed in the process.

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We come to President Johnson and whatever body he might have appointed to investigate this assassination. Did Carlos have enough on Johnson so that the new president would not wish an investigation to turn up evidence of Carlos' complicity? Of course he did. Carlos Marcello's payoff man in Texas in the 50s, the notorious Jack Halfen, had been a principal financial backer of Lyndon Johnson's political campaigns in Texas from the late '40s on, to the extent that it could be said that illegal profits from Marcello's alot machines in Dallas and Houston and from bookmakers' subscriptions to his racing wire service throughout all of Texas, used by Halfen to finance Johnson, were crucial to the success of Johnson's senatorial campaigns. How would it look if it came out in the press that the man accused of maaterminding the assassination of Kennedy had been an important backer of the man who

accused of masterminding the assassination of Aennedy had been an important backer of the man who
had profited most from the assassination?

There remained the question of Attorney General
Kennedy's response to the assassination of his
brother. According to Edward Becker, a private
investigator from Las Vegas, Marcello had stated in
September, 1961, that he believed the assassination of President Kennedy would destroy his younger brother's power, so that he would not be capable of galvanizing the Justice Department into launching s thorough investigation of the crime. Events proved Marcello's alleged prediction was absolutely valid. After the assassination, both Johnson and FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover turned their backs on Robert Kennedy and rendered him virtually power-

less as attorney general.

In fact, we can now affirm with reasonable certainty that upon the 25th anniversary of the assassination, no other conspiracy scenario seems even remotely as plausible as that suggesting the com-plicity of the Marcellos. The four individuals actually arrested by the po-

the four individuals actually arrested by the po-lice in connection with the assassination of the president and the murder of his suspected assassin were all connected either to Carlos Marcello or to one or more of his close associates.

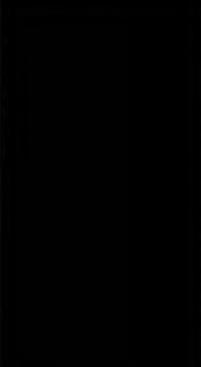
N CONFRONTING the possibility of the in-volvement of Carlos Marcello in the crime of the century, 25 years after Hoover deliberately avoided the issue, the question inevitably arises: Would a powerful Mafia leader in his right mind have ever chosen such an unpromising crew to accomplish a major execution as that ragtag bunch of ne'er-do-well misfits, Lee Harvey Oswald, David

ne'er-do-well misfits, Lee Harvey Oswald, David Ferrie and Jack Ruby?

It was precisely their apparent unsuitability and removal from the stereotype of the professional Maffa hitman that would have persuaded a Maffa leader to utilize Oswald. Ferrie and Ruby in an important execution. As Carlos Marceillo had "clearly indicated" to Edward Becker, "his own leutenants must not be identified as the assassins" so "that there would thus be a necessity to have them use or manipulate supposse also to carry out. so "that there would thus be a necessity to have them use or manipulate someone else to carry out the actual crime." An ex-defector to the Soviet Union who passes out pro-Clastro leaflets in the atreeta, a hairless ex-airline pilot with a history of arrests for committing "indecent acts" with young boys, and a small-time striptease joint operator—what a crew! Who would ever dream of linking these amateurs, these nonentities, to professional criminals, to the Mafia? The selection of such an apparable unprofessional sexession as Committee and the committee of the selection of such an apparable unprofessional sexession as Committee unprofessional sexession as Committee and the selection of such an apparable unprofessional sexession as Compellor expendent. ently unprofessional assessin as Oswald, or the framing of such a type in a murder plot, was another time-honored tradition of the Mafia.







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